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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 17 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has submitted its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2009-2011 at the elections to be held on 12 May 2009 during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

In this regard, kindly find attached a document containing the voluntary human rights pledges and commitments of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Mohammed F. **Al-Allaf**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 17 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Jordan's pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedom for all continues to be a high priority for Jordan. This commitment has been reaffirmed by the Jordanian leadership at the highest level. Hence, while seeking re-election, Jordan would like to confirm its commitment to the following.

I. The promotion and protection of human rights

Ever since Jordan's election to the Human Rights Council in 2006, concrete actions have been taken to integrate all human rights norms and principles into national laws and legislations. These are some examples:

1. The amendment of article 208 of the Jordanian Penal Code relating to torture in order to make it compatible with the definition of torture in the Convention against Torture.

2. Withdrawing reservation to article 15/4 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, while at the same time consideration is being given to removing reservations on certain subparagraphs of article 16.

3. The promulgation of the new Law on Combating Trafficking in Humans of 2009.

4. The enactment of a new Law on the Access to Information. Jordan is the first Arab country to have such a law that ensures the right to access to information while protecting the right of the individual to privacy.

5. The enactment of two laws pertaining to the right of people to peaceful assembly and the right to form associations.

6. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

7. The enactment in 2007 of the Press and Publication Law as well as the Law on Political Parties.

II. Institutional framework

To put these laws into effect, the authorities have established a strong institutional framework for the protection of human rights. In addition to impartial and independent courts, human rights are monitored by a number of other institutions and agencies such as the National Centre for Human Rights and the Ombudsman's Bureau. The latter was established in 2008 by a special law in order to deal with individuals' complaints against civil administration and injustices that may be practised by the latter. Also, a senior position for human rights is being

established in order to oversee all governmental activates in this domain and to ensure interdepartmental coordination. It will also provide advice to the authorities on ways and means to further promote human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In addition, a strong partnership between the Government and civil society has been established. Among the fruits of this partnership Jordan has played host to several seminars and workshops on various human rights issues, especially women and children rights, freedom of expression and other social and economic rights. Human rights education has also been integrated into formal school curricula.

III. Cooperation with the Human Rights Council

Jordan has been an active and fully involved founding member of the Human Rights Council, and throughout the first three years of its establishment, has played a leading role in the formation of its work.

During the first year of the life of the Council, a representative of Jordan served as one of the Vice-Chairpersons as well as the Rapporteur. In addition, Jordan's full involvement can be seen by the contribution it made in the following:

1. President and Special Rapporteur of the first Social Forum under the Human Rights Council.

2. Chair of the Working Group on Situations under the new Council.

3. Chair of the Meeting of States parties for the election of members to the Committee on Torture.

4. Facilitator for the establishment of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee.

At the same time, Jordan has always joined consensus on all major substantial issues considered by the Council. Furthermore, Jordan gives special attention to the activities of the Council. The fact that Jordan is seeking re-election is an additional testimony of Jordan's keen interest in the work of this body and its main role as an institution responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Throughout the three years of service on the Human Rights Council, Jordan has been a part of all major initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue and human coexistence, and has been active in the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural cooperation for peace.

IV. Cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Jordanian Government has always been keen to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and OHCHR. Accordingly, Jordan hosted the regional seminar on "Upholding Human Rights while Countering Terrorism" from 27 to 29 October 2008, as well as the Fifth Conference of the Arab National Human Rights Institutions on "Elections in the Arab World and their impact on human rights". The two seminars were jointly sponsored by Jordan and OHCHR. Jordan is committed to the continuation of such

cooperation with the High Commissioner and OHCHR. It will host the upcoming annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

V. Universal periodic review

Jordan attaches great importance to the implementation of the universal periodic review mechanism. Jordan presented its national country report to the Human Rights Council in February 2009. The report highlighted various human rights initiatives and future plans at the national level. Jordan has committed itself to the implementation of all recommendations it accepted when it presented its report.

Jordan is committed to strengthening its relationship with treaty-monitoring bodies and pledges to present its remaining outstanding periodic reports to the relevant committees in due time and to follow up on the recommendations arising from these dialogues.

VI. Cooperation with the special procedures

Jordan remains committed, as it has been in the past, to contributing to the work of the special procedures, and has followed their activities closely through the work of the former Commission on Human Rights and the current Human Rights Council. Consistent with this, Jordan pledges to follow up and, where appropriate, implement their recommendations; at the same time stands ready to cooperate with all mandate holders in the promotion and protection of human rights.